The Deeds of the Divine Augustus

By Augustus

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Written 14 A.C.E.

Translated by Thomas Bushnell, BSG

A copy below of the deeds of the divine Augustus, by which he subjected the whole wide earth to the rule of the Roman people, and of the money which he spent for the state and Roman people, inscribed on two bronze pillars, which are set up in Rome.

1. In my nineteenth year, on my own initiative and at my own expense, I raised an army with which I set free the state, which was oppressed by the domination of a faction. For that reason, the senate enrolled me in its order by laudatory resolutions, when Gaius Pansa and Aulus Hirtius were consuls (43 B.C.E.), assigning me the place of a consul in the giving of opinions, and gave me the imperium. With me as propraetor, it ordered me, together with the consuls, to take care lest any detriment befall the state. But the people made me consul in the same year, when the consuls each perished in battle, and they made me a triumvir for the settling of the state.

2. I drove the men who slaughtered my father into exile with a legal order, punishing their crime, and afterwards, when they waged war on the state, I conquered them in two battles.

3. I often waged war, civil and foreign, on the earth and sea, in the whole wide world, and as victor I spared all the citizens who sought pardon. As for

foreign nations, those which I was able to safely forgive, I preferred to preserve than to destroy. About five hundred thousand Roman citizens were sworn to me. I led something more than three hundred thousand of them into colonies and I returned them to their cities, after their stipend had been earned, and I assigned all of them fields or gave them money for their military service. I captured six hundred ships in addition to those smaller than triremes.

4. Twice I triumphed with an ovation, and three times I enjoyeda curule triumph and twenty one times I was named emperor. When the senate decreed more triumphs for me, I sat out from all of them. I placed the laurel from the fasces in the Capitol, when the vows which I pronounced in each war had been fulfilled. On account of the things successfully done by me and through my officers, under my auspices, on earth and sea, the senate decreed fifty-five times that there be sacrifices to the immortal gods. Moreover there were 890 days on which the senate decreed there would be sacrifices. In my triumphs kings and nine children of kings were led before my chariot. I had been consul thirteen times, when I wrote this, and I was in the thirty-seventh year of tribunician power (14 A.C.E.).

5. When the dictatorship was offered to me, both in my presence and my absence, by the people and senate, when Marcus Marcellus and Lucius Arruntius were consuls (22 B.C.E.), I did not accept it. I did not evade the curatorship of grain in the height of the food shortage, which I so arranged that within a few days I freed the entire city from the present fear and danger by my own expense and administration. When the annual and perpetual consulate was then again offered to me, I did not accept it.

6. When Marcus Vinicius and Quintus Lucretius were consuls (19 B.C.E.), then again when Publius Lentulus and Gnaeus Lentulus were (18 B.C.E.), and third when Paullus Fabius Maximus and Quintus Tubero were (11 B.C.E.), although the senateand Roman people consented that I alone be made curator of the laws and customs with the highest power, I received no magistracy offered contrary to the customs of the ancestors. What the senate then wanted to accomplish through me, I did through tribunician power, and five times on my own accord I both requested and received from the senate a colleague in such power.

7. I was triumvir for the settling of the state for ten continuous years. I was first of the senate up to that day on which I wrote this, for forty years. I was high priest, augur, one of the Fifteen for the performance of rites, one of the Seven of the sacred feasts, brother of Arvis, fellow of Titus, and Fetial.

8. When I was consul the fifth time (29 B.C.E.), I increased the number of patricians by order of the people and senate. I read the roll of the senate three times, and in my sixth consulate (28 B.C.E.) I made a census of the people with Marcus Agrippa as my colleague. I conducted a lustrum, after a

forty-one year gap, in which lustrum were counted 4,063,000 heads of Roman citizens. Then again, with consular imperium I conducted a lustrum alone when Gaius Censorinus and Gaius Asinius were consuls (8 B.C.E.), in which lustrum were counted 4,233,000 heads of Roman citizens. And the third time, with consular imperium, I conducted a lustrum with my son Tiberius Caesar as colleague, when Sextus Pompeius and Sextus Appuleius were consuls (14 A.C.E.), in which lustrum were counted 4,937,000 of the heads of Roman citizens. By new laws passed with my sponsorship, I restored many traditions of the ancestors, which were falling into disuse in our age, and myself I handed on precedents of many things to be imitated in later generations.

9. The senate decreed that vows be undertaken for my health by the consuls and priests every fifth year. In fulfillment of these vows they often celebrated games for my life; several times the four highest colleges of priests, several times the consuls. Also both privately and as a city all the citizens unanimously and continuously prayed at all the shrines for my health.

10. By a senate decree my name was included in the Saliar Hymn, and it was sanctified by a law, both that I would be sacrosanct for ever, and that, as long as I would live, the tribunician power would be mine. I was unwilling to be high priest in the place of my living colleague; when the people offered me that priesthood which my father had, I refused it. And I received that priesthood, after several years, with the death of him who had occupied it since the opportunity of the civil disturbance, with a multitude flocking together out of all Italy to my election, so many as had never before been in Rome, when Publius Sulpicius and Gaius Valgius were consuls (12 B.C.E.).

11. The senate consecrated the altar of Fortune the Bringer-back before the temples of Honor and Virtue at the Campanian gate for my retrn, on which it ordered the priests and Vestal virgins to offer yearly sacrifices on the day when I had returned to the city from Syria (when Quintus Lucretius and Marcus Vinicius were consuls (19 Bc)), and it named that day Augustalia after my cognomen.

12. By the authority of the senate, a part of the praetors and tribunes of the plebs, with consul Quintus Lucretius and the leading men, was sent to meet me in Campania, which honor had been decreed for no one but me until that time. When I returned to Rome from Spain and Gaul, having successfully accomplished matters in those provinces, when Tiberius Nero and Publius Quintilius were consuls (13 B.C.E.), the senate voted to consecrate the altar of August Peace in the field of Mars for my return, on which it ordered the magistrates and priests and Vestal virgins to offer annual sacrifices.

13. Our ancestors wanted Janus Quirinus to be closed when throughout the all the rule of the Roman people, by land and sea, peace had been secured through victory. Although before my birth it had been closed twice in all in recorded memory from the founding of the city, the senate voted three times in my principate that it be closed.

14. When my sons Gaius and Lucius Caesar, whom fortune stole from me as youths, were fourteen, the senate and Roman people made them consuls-designate on behalf of my honor, so that they would enter that magistracy after five years, and the senate decreed that on thatday when they were led into the forum they would be included in public councils. Moreover the Roman knights together named each of them first of the youth and gave them shields and spears.

15. I paid to the Roman plebs, HS 300 per man from my father's will and in my own name gave HS 400 from the spoils of war when I was consul for the fifth time (29 B.C.E.); furthermore I again paid out a public gift of HS 400 per man, in my tenth consulate (24 B.C.E.), from my own patrimony; and, when consul for the eleventh time (23 B.C.E.), twelve doles of grain personally bought were measured out; and in my twelfth year of tribunician power (12-11 B.C.E.) I gave HS 400 per man for the third time. And these public gifts of mine never reached fewer than 250,000 men. In my eighteenth year of tribunician power, as consul for the twelfth time (5 B.C.E.), I gave to 320,000 plebs of the city HS 240 per man. And, when consul the fifth time (29 B.C.E.), I gave from my war-spoils to colonies of my soldiers each HS 1000 per man; about 120,000 men i the colonies received this triumphal public gift. Consul for the thirteenth time (2 B.C.E.), I gave HS 240 to the plebs who then received the public grain; they were a few more than 200,000.

16. I paid the towns money for the fields which I had assigned to soldiers in my fourth consulate (30 B.C.E.) and then when Marcus Crassus and Gnaeus Lentulus Augur were consuls (14 B.C.E.); the sum was about HS 600,000,000 which I paid out for Italian estates, and about HS 260,000,000 which I paid for provincial fields. I was first and alone who did this among all who founded military colonies in Italy or the provinces according to the memory of my age. And afterwards, when Tiberius Nero and Gnaeus Piso were consuls (7 B.C.E.), and likewise when Gaius Antistius and Decius Laelius were consuls (6 B.C.E.), and when Gaius Calvisius and Lucius Passienus were consuls (4 B.C.E.), and when Lucius Lentulus and Marcus Messalla were consuls (3 B.C.E.), and when Lucius Caninius and Quintus Fabricius were consuls (2 B.C.E.) , I paid out rewards in cash to the soldiers whom I had led into their towns when their service was completed, and in this venture I spent about HS 400,000,000.

17. Four times I helped the senatorial treasury with my money, so that I offered HS 150,000,000 to those who were in charge of the treasury. And

when Marcus Lepidus and Luciu Arruntius were consuls (6 A.C.E.), I offered HS 170,000,000 from my patrimony to the military treasury, which was founded by my advice and from which rewards were given to soldiers who had served twenty or more times.

18. From that year when Gnaeus and Publius Lentulus were consuls (18 Bc), when the taxes fell short, I gave out contributions of grain and money from my granary and patrimony, sometimes to 100,000 men, sometimes to many more.

19. I built the senate-house and the Chalcidicum which adjoins it and the temple of Apollo on the Palatine with porticos, the temple of divine Julius, the Lupercal, the portico at the Flaminian circus, which I allowed to be called by the name Octavian, after he who had earlier built in the same place, the state box at the great circus, the temple on the Capitoline of Jupiter Subduer and Jupiter Thunderer, the temple of Quirinus, the temples of Minerva and Queen Juno and Jupiter Liberator on the Aventine, the temple of the Lares at the top of the holy street, the temple of the gods of the Penates on the Velian, the temple of Youth, and the temple of the Great Mother on the Palatine.

20. I rebuilt the Capitol and the theater of Pompey, each work at enormous cost, without any inscription of my name. I rebuilt aqueducts in many places that had decayed with age, and I doubled the capacity of the Marcian aqueduct by sending a new spring into its channel. I completed the Forum of Julius and the basilic which he built between the temple of Castor and the temple of Saturn, works begun and almost finished by my father. When the same basilica was burned with fire I expanded its grounds and I began it under an inscription of the name of my sons, and, if I should not complete it alive, I ordered it to be completed by my heirs. Consul for the sixth time (28 B.C.E.), I rebuilt eighty-two temples of the gods in the city by the authority of the senate, omitting nothing which ought to have been rebuilt at that time. Consul for the seventh time (27 B.C.E.), I rebuilt the Flaminian road from the city to Ariminum and all the bridges except the Mulvian and Minucian.

21. I built the temple of Mars Ultor on private ground and the forum of Augustus from war-spoils. I build the theater at the temple of Apollo on ground largely bought from private owners, under the name of Marcus Marcellus my son-in-law. I consecrated gifts from war-spoils in the Capitol and in the temple of divine Julius, in the temple of Apollo, in the tempe of Vesta, and in the temple of Mars Ultor, which cost me about HS 100,000,000. I sent back gold crowns weighing 35,000 to the towns and colonies of Italy, which had been contributed for my triumphs, and later, however many times I was named emperor, I refused gold crowns from the towns and colonies which they equally kindly decreed, and before they had decreed them.

22. Three times I gave shows of gladiators under my name and five times under the name of my sons and grandsons; in these shows about 10,000 men fought. Twice I furnished under my name spectacles of athletes gathered from everywhere, and three times under my grandson's name. I celebrated games under my name four times, and furthermore in the place of other magistrates twenty-three times. As master of the college I celebrated the secular games for the college of the Fifteen, with my colleague Marcus Agrippa, when Gaius Furnius and Gaius Silanus were consuls (17 B.C.E.). Consul for the thirteenth time (2 B.C.E.), I celebrated the first games of Mas, which after that time thereafter in following years, by a senate decree and a law, the consuls were to celebrate. Twenty-six times, under my name or that of my sons and grandsons, I gave the people hunts of African beasts in the circus, in the open, or in the amphitheater; in them about 3,500 beasts were killed.

23. I gave the people a spectacle of a naval battle, in the place across the Tiber where the grove of the Caesars is now, with the ground excavated in length 1,800 feet, in width 1,200, in which thirty beaked ships, biremes or triremes, but many smaller, fought among themselves; in these ships about 3,000 men fought in addition to the rowers.

24. In the temples of all the cities of the province of Asia, as victor, I replaced the ornaments which he with whom I fought the war had possessed privately after he despoiled the temples. Silver statues of me-on foot, on horseback, and standing in a chariot-were erected in about eighty cities, which I myself removed, and from the money I placed goldn offerings in the temple of Apollo under my name and of those who paid the honor of the statues to me.

25. I restored peace to the sea from pirates. In that slave war I handed over to their masters for the infliction of punishments about 30,000 captured, who had fled their masters and taken up arms against the state. All Italy swore allegiance to me voluntarily, and demanded me as leader of the war which I won at Actium; the provinces of Gaul, Spain, Africa, Sicily, and Sardinia swore the same allegiance. And those who then fought under my standard were more than 700 senators, among whom 83 were made consuls either before or after, up to the day this was written, and about 170 were made priests.

26. I extended the borders of all the provinces of the Roman people which neighbored nations not subject to our rule. I restored peace to the provinces of Gaul and Spain, likewise Germany, which includes the ocean from Cadiz to the mouth of the river Elbe. I brought peace to the Alps from the region which i near the Adriatic Sea to the Tuscan, with no unjust war waged against any nation. I sailed my ships on the ocean from the mouth of the Rhine to the east region up to the borders of the Cimbri, where no Roman

had gone before that time by land or sea, and the Cimbri and the Charydes and the Semnones and the other Germans of the same territory sought by envoys the friendship of me and of the Roman people. By my order and auspices two armies were led at about the same time into Ethiopia and into that part of Arabia which is called Happy, and the troops of each nation of enemies were slaughtered in battle and many towns captured. They penetrated into Ethiopia all the way to the town Nabata, which is near to Meroe; and into Arabia all the way to the border of the Sabaei, advancing to the town Mariba.

27. I added Egypt to the rule of the Roman people. When Artaxes, king of Greater Armenia, was killed, though I could have made it a province, I preferred, by the example of our elders, to hand over that kingdomto Tigranes, son of king Artavasdes, and grandson of King Tigranes, through Tiberius Nero, who was then my step-son. And the same nation, after revolting and rebelling, and subdued through my son Gaius, I handed over to be ruled by King Ariobarzanes son of Artabazus, King of the Medes, and after his death, to his son Artavasdes; and when he was killed, I sent Tigranes, who came from the royal clan of the Armenians, into that rule. I recovered all the provinces which lie across the Adriatic to the east and Cyrene, with kings now possessing them in large part, and Sicily and Sardina, which had been occupied earlier in the slave war.

28. I founded colonies of soldiers in Africa, Sicily, Macedonia, each Spain, Greece, Asia, Syria, Narbonian Gaul, and Pisidia, and furthermore had twenty-eight colonies founded in Italy under my authority, which were very populous and crowded while I lived.

29. I recovered from Spain, Gaul, and Dalmatia the many military standards lost through other leaders, after defeating te enemies. I compelled the Parthians to return to me the spoils and standards of three Roman armies, and as suppliants to seek the friendship of the Roman people. Furthermore I placed those standards in the sanctuary of the temple of Mars Ultor.

30. As for the tribes of the Pannonians, before my principate no army of the Roman people had entered their land. When they were conquered through Tiberius Nero, who was then my step-son and emissary, I subjected them to the rule of the Roman people and extended the borders of Illyricum to the shores of the river Danube. On the near side of it the army of the Dacians was conquered and overcome under my auspices, and then my army, led across the Danube, forced the tribes of the Dacians to bear the rule of the Roman people.

31. Emissaries from the Indian kings were often sent to me, which had not been seen before that time by any Roman leader. The Bastarnae, the Scythians, and the Sarmatians, who are on this side of the river Don and

the kings further away, an the kings of the Albanians, of the Iberians, and of the Medes, sought our friendship through emissaries.

32. To me were sent supplications by kings: of the Parthians, Tiridates and later Phrates son of king Phrates, of the Medes, Artavasdes, of the Adiabeni, Artaxares, of the Britons, Dumnobellaunus and Tincommius, of the Sugambri, Maelo, of the Marcomanian Suebi (...) (-)rus. King Phrates of the Parthians, son of Orodes, sent all his sons and grandsons into Italy to me, though defeated in no war, but seeking our friendship through the pledges of his children. And in my principate many other peoples experienced the faith of the Roman people, of whom nothing had previously existed of embassies or interchange of friendship with the Roman people.

33. The nations of the Parthians and Medes received from me the first kings of those nations which they sought by emissaries: the Parthians, Vonones son of king Phrates, grandson of king Orodes, the Medes, Ariobarzanes, son of king Artavasdes, grandson of king Aiobarzanes.

34. In my sixth and seventh consulates (28-27 B.C.E.), after putting out the civil war, having obtained all things by universal consent, I handed over the state from my power to the dominion of the senate and Roman people. And for this merit of mine, by a senate decree, I was called Augustus and the doors of my temple were publicly clothed with laurel and a civic crown was fixed over my door and a gold shield placed in the Julian senate-house, and the inscription of that shield testified to the virtue, mercy, justice, and piety, for which the senate and Roman people gave it to me. After that time, I exceeded all in influence, but I had no greater power than the others who were colleagues with me in each magistracy.

35. When I administered my thirteenth consulate (2 B.C.E.), the senate and Equestrian order and Roman people all called me father of the country, and voted that the same be inscribed in the vestibule of my temple, in the Julian senate-house, and in the forum of Augustus under the chario which had been placed there for me by a decision of the senate. When I wrote this I was seventy-six years old.

Appendix

Written after Augustus' death.

1. All the expenditures which he gave either into the treasury or to the Roman plebs or to discharged soldiers: HS 2,400,000,000.

2. The works he built: the temples of Mars, of Jupiter Subduer and Thunderer, of Apollo, of divine Julius, of Minerva, of Queen Juno, of Jupiter Liberator, of the Lares, of the gods of the Penates, of Youth, and of the Great Mother, the Lupercal, the state box at the circus, the senate-house

with the Chalcidicum, the forum of Augustus, the Julian basilica, the theater of Marcellus, the Octavian portico, and the grove of the Caesars across the Tiber.

3. He rebuilt the Capitol and holy temples numbering eighty-two, the theater of Pompey, waterways, and the Flaminian road.

4. The sum expended on theatrical spectacles and gladatorial games and athletes and hunts and mock naval battles and money given to colonies, cities, andtowns destroyed by earthquake and fire or per man to friends and senators, whom he raised to the senate rating: innumerable.

THE END

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